

Application No. 09/681,354
Amendment "A" dated January 4, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed November 16, 2004

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A hardware card for insertion into a television tuning device having electronic program guide capability comprising:
a case having a form factor; and,
a non-volatile memory situated within the case and having data stored thereon that enable the television tuning device to access one or more electronic program guides from ~~one or more~~ a plurality of corresponding electronic program guide providers, the data including at least one URL, corresponding to at least one server of the plurality of electronic program guide providers, the card further comprising means for providing the data to the television tuning device, for enabling the television tuning device to connect to the server, wherein the server, upon being connected to by the television tuning device, indicates to the television tuning device how to access the one or more electronic program guides.
2. (Original) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the data represents one or more loader programs for the television tuning device, each loader program corresponding to an electronic program guide provider.
3. (Original) The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program comprises a decoder segment to decode encoded electronic program guide information from the electronic program guide provider to which the loader program corresponds.
4. (Original) The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program includes specification of a transmission network over which encoded electronic program guide information is received from the electronic program guide provider to which the loader program corresponds.

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5. (Original) The hardware card of claim 4, wherein the transmission network comprises at least one of: a dial-up modem, Ethernet, in-band, out-of-band, vertical-blanking interrupt (VBI).
6. (Original) The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program includes a database segment to transfer the loader program into the television tuning device.
7. (Original) The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program includes a segment to provide a user interface.
8. (Original) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the data represents non-executable information decodable by the television tuning device to access electronic program guide information from an electronic program guide provider.
9. (Original) The hardware card of claim 8, wherein the non-executable information is decodable by a decoder segment of the television tuning device.
10. (Original) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the non-volatile memory comprises flash memory.
11. (Original) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the television tuning device comprises a set-top box.
12. (Original) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the form factor comprises one of: a Smart Card form factor, a Compact Flash form factor, and a Smart Media form factor.

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13. (Currently Amended) A television tuning device comprising:

an outer case;

internal components hard-coded to a particular electronic program guide provider;

a slot within the outer case to accept a hardware card having a form factor to provide the device with capability to receive electronic program guide information from an at least one other electronic program guide provider, that is different than said particular electronic program guide provider the television tuning device is hard-coded to,
over a specified network;

means for switching to the at least one other EPG provider than the particular EPG provider that the television tuning device is hard-coded to, and in response to accessing data on the hardware card; and,

one or more connections within the outer case to communicatively couple the device to a display.

14. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein the form factor comprises one of: a Smart Card form factor, a Compact Flash form factor, and a Smart Media form factor.

15. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein the hardware card has a non-volatile memory on which non-executable information is stored that is decodable by a decoder segment of the television tuning device, the non-executable information, when decoded by the decoder segment, providing the device with the capability to receive the electronic program guide information.

16. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein the hardware card has a non-volatile memory on which a loader program is stored that corresponds to the electronic program guide provider, the loader program providing the device with the capability to receive the electronic program guide information.

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17. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

inserting a hardware card into a slot of a television tuning device communicatively coupled to a display; and,

accessing data stored on the hardware card to enable the device to receive electronic program guide information, over a specified network, from an electronic program guide provider over a specified network, wherein said electronic program guide information is different than other electronic program guide information that the television tuning device was hard-coded to receive, such that accessing the data stored on the hardware card effectively enables the television tuning device to change the type of electronic program guide information received at the television tuning device.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein accessing the data stored on the hardware card includes loading a loader program from the hardware card into the television tuning device, the loader program corresponding to the electronic program guide provider and enabling the device to receive the electronic program guide information.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein accessing the data stored on the hardware card includes decoding non-executable information from the hardware card to enable the device to receive the electronic program guide information.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising removing the hardware card from the slot of the television tuning device.

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21. (Currently Amended) A method of doing business comprising:

offering a consumer one or more electronic program guide hardware cards for purchase, the cards able to be inserted into a corresponding slot of a television tuning device used by the consumer, each card enabling the television tuning device to switch access from a first electronic program guide provider that the television tuning device is programmed to access for obtaining electronic program guide information to a different electronic program guide provider to obtain different electronic program guide information;

purchasing, by the consumer, of an electronic program guide hardware card; and,

loading the electronic program guide hardware card into the television tuning device, wherein loading the electronic program guide hardware card causes the television tuning device to switch access from the first electronic program guide provider to a different electronic guide provider.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein loading the electronic program guide hardware card into the television tuning device is performed by the consumer.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein loading the electronic program guide hardware card into the television tuning device is performed by a merchant.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, further initially comprising receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer includes purchasing of the television tuning device by the consumer.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer includes providing of the television tuning device by a merchant to the consumer free-of-charge to the consumer.

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27. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer includes receiving by the consumer of an electronic program guide hardware card along with the television tuning device.

28. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising accessing a provider server by the television tuning device to receive the different electronic program guide information associated with the electronic program guide hardware card inserted into the television tuning device.

29. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising, as part of the purchasing by the consumer of the electronic program guide hardware card, registering the hardware card with a provider server to indicate the different electronic program guide information associated with the electronic program guide hardware card.

30. (New) A hardware card as recited in claim 1, wherein the hardware card includes a plurality of different loader programs, each corresponding to a different one of a plurality of different EPG providers, and each different loader program enabling the television tuning device to obtain an electronic program guide from a different one of the plurality of the different EPG providers.

31. (New) A hardware card as recited in claim 1, wherein the hardware card further includes information specifying to a user what the user must do to load, to the television tuning device, the data that enables the television tuning device to access the one or more electronic program guides.

32. (New) A hardware card as recited in claim 31, wherein the information specifies that the user must enter at least one of a credit card number and an authentication code.

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33. (New) A hardware card as recited in claim 1, wherein the data consists of non-executable information, and wherein the hardware card stores the non-executable information without storing any executable code.

34. (New) A hardware card as recited in claim 1, wherein the data enables the television tuning device to access one or more electronic program guides from the plurality of electronic program guide providers that is different than an electronic program guide provider that the television tuning device is programmed to access.

35. (New) A method as recited in claim 17, wherein said electronic program guide provider is different than another electronic program guide provider that the television tuning device is hard-coded to, such that the hardware card effectively enables the television tuning device to switch from a first electronic program guide provider to a second electronic program guide provider.

36. (New) A method as recited in claim 18, wherein each of the said electronic program guide provider and the said another electronic program guide provider encode the electronic program guide information differently.

37. (New) A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the type of electronic program guide information corresponds to a type of quality.

38. (New) A method as recited in claim 18, wherein each of the said electronic program guide provider and the said another electronic program guide provider encode the electronic program guide information differently.

39. (New) A method as recited in claim 21, wherein the first electronic program guide provider supplied the television tuning device to the consumer.